

## Methods of Teaching History

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# *Annals Addenda . . .*

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## METHODS OF TEACHING HISTORY

Speaking on "The College Looks at the Schoolmaster," Dr. Christian Gauss, dean at Princeton University for the past twenty years and president of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, declared recently:

By the excessive emphasis on courses in American history, American literature and American civilization, we are cutting ourselves off from the broader, deeper, more humane currents in our own American tradition. Let us admit that we have gone farther in this direction than is wise if we are to live in one world.

The *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* says in comment: Here is a challenge and a warning by one of the nation's foremost educators, a challenge which demands full consideration not only by teachers of American history and literature, but also by historical societies. The historical society's role is two-fold: it collects and preserves the record of state and local history, and it acts as schoolmaster in history to the state and the community. Its obligation as collector and custodian of materials which comprise the story of the people and their associations is clear and unqualified. Its duty as preceptor should be limited by the prescription of truth and justice and loyalty to the basic ideals and traditions of the whole people.

Dean Gauss apparently fears that an overemphasis on American history has enabled certain forces and private interests to distort the basic principles of Americanism to their own selfish advantage. The people, lulled into complacency by a false pride in their homeland, are the victims. In a troubled world, such as ours today, a rational citizenry must be awake constantly to threats against its peace and security. Contrary to Dean Gauss' suggestion, however, it is a knowledge of Ameri-

can history, in its broadest sense, that will guarantee an alert people. We need not worry now about teaching too much American history; what we must consider primarily is our methods of teaching it.

History is no mere antiquarianism. It is not a collection of artifacts, nor a list of firsts, nor a catalog of heroes, nor an account of wars. Nor is history merely a chronological ranking of details. History in its large meaning is the record of the people—not only of what they did, thought, and felt, but of how and why, and also of what the result was. This is not the history of newspaper ads, nor propagandist pamphleteers, nor ambitious politicians. This is the history that is in reality the understanding of ourselves, a concept which implies a knowledge of our neighbors and our relationships with them. History conceives in our hearts the loyalties, faiths, and ideals which are the driving forces of any happy and successful nation.

The good schoolmaster, then, is one who discovers for his students the truths and values that history reveals. Armed with the lessons of its history no nation need fear its future.

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### OLDEST MIDWEST SETTLEMENT

The 250th anniversary of Cahokia, Illinois, the oldest settlement in the Mississippi valley, will be observed during a two-week period beginning May 14. More than twenty historical and civic organizations are co-operating with the Cahokia 250th Anniversary association in planning the observance.

The event will include civic and religious ceremonies, pageant, music festival, military parade and tours to nearby points of interest in the early French culture of the middle west. Cahokia, at the junction of Illinois Highways 3 and 157, is adjacent to the East St. Louis—St. Louis metropolitan area.

Participants in the observance will include the governor of Illinois, the French ambassador, the cardinal archbishop of Chicago and others prominent in public life.

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